EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

VALLETTA 2018

THEME 3
COMMUNITY INCLUSION & SPACE

EVALUATION & MONITORING
Research Findings 2016

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Valletta 2018 Evaluation & Monitoring process is a means through which the Valletta 2018 Foundation The Valletta 2018 Evaluation & Monitoring process is a means through which the Valletta 2018 Foundation gains a deeper insight into the various impacts of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) title on different spheres of cultural, social and economic life. The goal of this process is twofold (i) To understand the changes brought about by the ECoC title, and (ii) To address any shortcomings and challenges faced by the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme throughout its implementation.

This process comprises a series of longitudinal studies commencing in January 2015, three full years before the European Capital of Culture year, and running through the ECoC, with results preented in 2019, thereby capturing data before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of Valletta holding the ECoC title.

This process is divided into five themes:
1. **Cultural & Territorial Vibrancy**
2. **Governance & Finance**
3. **Community Inclusion & Space**
4. **The Tourist Experience**
5. **The Valletta Brand**

This research is a collaborative, mixed-methods process, involving a number of public entities, collecting and analysing data primarily of a quantitative nature, together with independent researchers working with data that is predominantly qualitative. These entities and researchers constitute the Valletta 2018 Evaluation & Monitoring Steering Committee, that was set up to manage and implement this research process.

The public entities forming part of the Steering Committee are:
- National Statistics Office
- Malta Tourism Authority
- Jobsplus
- Economic Policy Department within the Ministry of Finance

The independent researchers participating within this process were selected according to their area of expertise. The areas covered are:
- Cultural Programme
- Branding
- Sociology
- Built Environment
- European Identity

Although each of these researchers, and their respective teams, are carrying out data collection and analysis specifically within their respective fields, various points of intersection and collaboration across the various areas have been established so far. The data being collected throughout each study is being shared with the Steering Committee in order to create synergies between the different fields being analysed.

The research methods adopted throughout the various studies that comprise this process vary greatly, ranging from quantitative surveys to in-depth interviews, focus groups and real-time experience tracking.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION & SPACE
THEME 3

The European Capital of Culture is not only concerned with the development of the cultural sector but, more broadly, with the myriad ways in which different communities within a city or region participate in culture and interact with one another and their physical environment. The studies within this strand investigate these issues, reflecting upon how inclusive the Valletta 2018 programme is to different community groups within the city, and what impact the infrastructural developments taking place across the city are having on the surrounding communities.

The first of these studies, carried out by Michael Deguara, looks into community inclusion and accessibility, investigating the extent to which various community groups operating within Valletta in some way or other are involved within Valletta 2018. This study examines the factors that may help or hinder participation and involvement within Valletta 2018, including the various obstacles to accessibility, ranging from physical to educational and financial barriers to participation.

A second study by Dr Antoine Zammit, takes a closer look at a series of tangible, infrastructural developments being carried out across Valletta, and seeks to understand the spatial and social impact that these developments may have on the communities that interact with them on a regular basis. This study identifies four projects – the Valletta Design Cluster, MUŻA, Strait Street, and Is-Suq tal-Belt – and examines the extent to which these (and similar) developments may lead to a broader process of culture-led regeneration.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN VALLETTA 2018

Michael Deguara with **Marguerite Pace Bonello** and **Rene Magri**

ABSTRACT

This research project seeks to identify factors affecting community participation and accessibility, with an emphasis on the awareness that various groups have of the Valletta 2018 Programme. It also aims to explore perceptions of Valletta's forseeable developments, particularly those related to the City as a community space.

Physical accessibility for persons with a disability is still very limited, although improvements have been noted. Interviewees with disability have reported attending events from the Valletta 2018 Programme. Valletta tends to have otherwise good internal accessibility although reaching the City is a more challenging task. The implications of this is that Valletta has seen a shift from being a commercial centre to a cultural and entertainment centre.

With regard to the future of Valletta's community life, respondents tended to be strongly positive on current changes and those anticipated for the immediate future, which they saw as restoring "life" and dignity to the City. However, most respondents felt that in the longer term it will become increasingly more difficult for Beltin or even Maltese people to live in Valletta. This is a process that can be mitigated to some extent through the adoption of humanistic, consultative and inclusive approaches to policy making, but the phenomenon also depends on economic forces which would require political intervention.

Awareness of the Programme has also increased, and most respondents have attended events that form part of it. Nevertheless, interviewees tended to be much more aware of individual events rather than the Valletta 2018 brand, indicating that more visibility of the Programme is required.

Keywords: Community inclusion; Accessibility; Participation; Social engagement.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from the second cycle of a research project which aims to identify factors affecting participation by various community groups related to the Valletta 2018 project, with particular emphasis on elements that promote or hinder the inclusion of a diverse audience. The report also focuses on the theme of accessibility, which is understood as comprising physical, social, geographical, financial, linguistic, and intellectual accessibility.

In the previous cycle, which comprised research held in 2015, it was noted that the accomplishment of the mission of the Valletta 2018 Foundation depended on an in-depth understanding of the social milieu in which the project is being implemented, as attested by the literature which notes that local involvement and the consideration of context are common success factors (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004) and that the engagement of both stakeholders and the public is an "indicator of potential success in delivery" (Garcia and Cox, 2013).

The current cycle of this research project continues to seek to identify factors affecting community participation and accessibility, with an emphasis on the awareness that respondents have of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme, both in terms of individual events and its general aims and impact.

This cycle of research also aims to shed more light on perceptions held by respondents with regard to Valletta's forseeable developments, particularly those related to the city as a community space. As will be explored in more detail in this report, the Valletta 2018 project is widely seen as a catalyst for urban regeneration, and this naturally raises concerns of how the inexorable impact on the city's communal life is to be managed. These concerns, which had already emerged in the research carried out in 2015, are looked into with more depth in this report.

This report will present a brief review of the methodology used and the key themes emerging from the research, followed by an account of the findings from the current cycle. The analysis of the impact which Valletta 2018, as a catalyst for urban regeneration, is anticipated to have on communal life within the City, is accompanied by a discussion of some of the key ideas from the literature, and how these can be applied to the specific case presented by Valletta and the Valletta 2018 Programme. Finally the report will give its conclusions, and will proceed to pave the Way Forward for further research and provide recommendations.

METHODOLOGY & KEY THEMES

The Methodology remains largely consonant with that developed in the previous cycle, being based on semi-structured interviews carried out with four individuals selected from each of six identified community groups, namely:

i.   Persons who identify as being from Valletta (Beltin), and who reside in Valletta;
ii.   Persons who identify as being from Valletta (Beltin), but do not reside in Valletta;
iii.   Persons who do not identify as being from Valletta (non-Beltin), but who reside in Valletta (including expatriates);
iv.   Persons who are residents of the Inner Harbour / "Greater Valletta" area;
v.   Maltese people in general, who commute to Valletta with different levels of regularity;
vi.   Maltese people who have a disability.

This set of community groups, which was selected to reflect a variety of ways in which Valletta is lived and experienced, has been retained primarily because it was found that there are important distinctions that run along the fault lines of residence and symbolic belonging, as well as the varying degrees of access to Valletta as both a geographical space and a social place. However, the retention of these groups also provides continuity throughout the research, thereby allowing for comparability between results obtained from year to year. The respondents chosen included mostly new respondents, although a small amount of respondents were selectively chosen from the previous cycle to also provide a degree of continuity.

With regard to the cohort of persons with a disability, the inclusion of this group has been found to highlight issues of accessibility with exceptional clarity. Although the respondents from this group were all persons with a physical disability, the richness of the interviews allows insights into a wider range of issues than merely physical notions of access, and included emotional and socio-environmental concerns. Furthermore, the notion of accessibility was mainstreamed throughout the groups so that questions on the subject were asked to all respondents.

The interviews carried out were complemented by meetings related to community oriented programmes within Valletta 2018, which provided further insights. In particular, meetings were held with the Manager of the Valletta Design Cluster, and the Coordinator of the Ġewwa Barra project. Furthermore, a meeting was held with the Valletta 2018 Programme Coordinator, which will be maintained on a quarterly basis, due to the centrality of the Cultural Programme to the nature of this research.

As per last year, the interview included questions about the respondents' awareness of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme and its aims. It was noted that respondents could possibly relate more to specific events even when they had some awareness of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme as a whole, and therefore, following questioning on a general level, reference was made to specific key events and initiatives, if respondents had not already identified them.

One key conclusion which emerged from the research carried out in 2015 was that a concern with the gentrification and monumentalisation of Valletta is to some extent counterbalanced by the notion that Valletta is being given back its vitality - "il-Belt qed terġa' tieħu l-ħajja" – which featured prominently particularly in the responses of the Beltin. However, such concerns remain strong and this warranted exploration in

further depth of the role of Valletta 2018 as a catalyst for urban regeneration, and its impact on communal life, including Valletta's foreseeable future in terms of liveability and a multidimensional vision of quality of life with a particular focus on emotional and social wellbeing.

To be able to explore these themes in more detail, interviewees were asked about which spaces in Valletta they frequent, how liveable they feel Valletta is and whether they would consider living there (or moving out, if they already live there). They were also asked what changes they thought Valletta 2018 and related projects would bring, and what effects they thought these would have on their quality of life or that of others.

FINDINGS

This section of the report presents the most salient points emerging from the research conducted this year, primarily from the semi-structured interviews held with the various community groups identified. This report, which builds on the findings of the first cycle of this project, aims primarily to explore:

- issues related to accessibility and day-to-day life in Valletta;
- the role of Valletta 2018 as a catalyst for urban regeneration, and the impact this has on communal life; and
- the level of awareness of the Valletta 2018 Programme and its aims, together with the accessibility of the Programme itself.

Valletta – the city and its accessibility

One of the main conclusions in the previous cycle of research was that Valletta is a place which has multiple layers of meaning to people from the various community groups identified, straddling a number of roles: from the political, administrative and cultural capital of the nation state to the intimacy of a home town with close knit community groups. As a geographical space it is well connected by public transport but the effectiveness of this connectivity is diminished by congestion and a shortage of parking facilities, as well as by the natural topography and built environment of the city which reduces its physical accessibility, especially for persons with limited mobility. From the previous year's research it also transpired that difficulty in accessing Valletta as a physical space in turn limited the level of engagement that individuals had with the city as a social place, and consequently with the Valletta 2018 Programme. In fact, the persons with disability who were interviewed in the previous cycle had demonstrated little to no engagement with Valletta or the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme.

In the research carried out this year, the respondents with disability were frustrated that most events, retail spaces, catering establishments and other public spaces in or around Valletta remain largely inaccessible, with Strait Street being a case mentioned by all respondents from this cohort as a place that they have not yet been able to visit due to limitations of physical accessibility. Moreover, it was noted that Valletta lacks proper signage for people with visual and other sensory impairments.

Nevertheless, since the first cycle of research, there was also a marked feeling among this cohort that the situation has improved slightly, and in this regard Valletta 2018 was mentioned as a main contributor to this development. Progress was noted with regard to a number of cultural venues which are wheelchair accessible, such as Pjazza Teatru Rjal. It was also observed with satisfaction that the Valletta 2018 Foundation is working closely with the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD), and that this augurs well for making Valletta and the Valletta 2018 Programme more accessible. The general outlook of the respondents from this cohort towards urban regeneration within Valletta was largely positive, as this has been seen to have helped make the city a more welcoming place, and provided persons with disability with new avenues of cultural and social participation. However, respondents voiced some scepticism on a number of developments including the increase in the number of boutique hotels and catering or entertainment spaces. These were not, from the perspective of the disability cohort, increasing the city's accessibility profile, with the developments in Strait Street being the clearest example of this.

Although it was appreciated that many buildings in Valletta are historical edifices and that this poses limitations on what interventions are possible, respondents stated that there are innovative ways to make such spaces accessible, for instance by using chair lifts or temporary ramps. One of the respondents noted that Valletta compared poorly with regard to accessibility when compared to other European capitals, which displayed creativity in the way that old, historically-sensitive places were made accessible: "We need to be more creative when we plan, or when we do an uplift or an upgrade. Architecture is an art, and this implies creativity - but I rarely have seen much creativity in making buildings and spaces accessible! .... We need the will, the political and social will to make this our focus, to make sure that contractors do not just do the bare minimum."

This raises the importance of ensuring that spaces can serve the diverse needs of a community, and respondents from the disability cohort highlighted that simple steps like the provision of ramps or accessible facilities would profit businesses whilst making persons with disability feel that they are worthwhile customers. Indeed, one respondent became very emotional when describing her appreciation and satisfaction towards a Valletta shop owner who provided a ramp with which she could access the shop.

Although in the previous year, respondents from this cohort had virtually not participated in any cultural or social events in Valletta, the respondents in this cycle of research said that they would participate more in cultural life if accessibility to cultural spaces became more reliable. In fact, two respondents attended the Notte Bianca, and said that they enjoyed it greatly, but had to stick to events held in Republic Street itself, as most museums and palaces were not fully accessible. One of these respondents also attended the Valletta Pageant of the Seas and stated that he would consider moving to Valletta if it became more accessible.

Other cohorts emphasised different aspects of accessibility. Respondents from the Inner Harbour area, for instance, talked about how Strait Street had become "accessible" following a long period in which it was a place that they would have avoided in the evening. In this case, the respondents are adopting a more social understanding of accessibility, namely the increased acceptability of frequenting what used to be a stigmatised place, as well as a perception that this area is now safer than it was historically renowned to be. In terms of perceived safety, however, some areas such as Hastings Gardens were mentioned as places to be avoided after dark "to avoid the possibility of harassment" ("biex tevita l-fastidju").

The cohort of commuters talked about Valletta as having a problem of accessibility due to its geography, and sympathised with elderly or disabled people who had to access the place: "There should be lifts or escalators everywhere. I don't know how the aged or persons with disability are supposed to get around the city. And none of us are getting any younger".

One of the non-Beltin Valletta residents complained that accessibility is an issue for wheelchair users, but emphasised that this was the situation everywhere in Malta, and not just in Valletta, citing frustrating experiences accompanying a friend with disability in various places. At times, it was the widespread development that is ongoing in the city that was seen as an obstacle to accessibility - one Valletta resident, for instance, complained particularly about the number of cranes that are allowed, seemingly without any planning and resulting in the blocking of access.

With the exception of persons who have limited mobility, the major problem with accessibility was generally seen to be actually reaching the city, whilst internal accessibility was otherwise acceptable. Thus, one Valletta resident said that it is a feat for her friends from outside Valletta when they "have to" visit the city to buy something specific. However, most Valletta residents observed that within Valletta, "everything is near"

and that this provided a good level of convenience. One respondent who is a Belti but lives outside Valletta, and is a full-time musician, said that although he finds Valletta "extremely beautiful" and was very well versed in the City's musical heritage, he avoids playing in Valletta because it is a logistical nightmare to bring in the equipment when delivery trucks have specific hours in which they can enter the City.

The problem with accessing the City from other localities meant that a number of respondents from the commuter cohort suggested that Valletta might eventually be a place where the only feasible commercial establishments will be souvenir shops and eateries, thus becoming the same as most city centres, mainly catering for tourists or people who work in the area, rather than for a resident community.

In fact, in part also due to the rise of other commercial centres all around the country, Valletta is being seen as less of a commercial hub than it used to be. One respondent from among the non-Beltin residents noted the prices going up and the effect this has on small shop owners, together with competition from other areas of Malta, stating: "I think of Valletta as a place of culture more than as a place of trade or business." The re-opening of the Suq tal-Belt (the Valletta Market) in Merchant's Street, however, was viewed as something that would facilitate the lives of Valletta residents in general, especially if a delivery system is organised. The concerns about the Suq were more about its eventual character and affordability for locals, which will be explored later in this section.

Some respondents (specifically two non-Beltin residing in Valletta and one commuter) suggested that Valletta can be thought of "as a larger area that takes in the three cities on one side and Sliema on the other, as if the city has overflowed. That way the city seems bigger although most cultural events remain on the peninsula." This is in no way a consensus, and local identity and distinctions are still often felt and highlighted through feasts, football and other celebrations (as best exemplified in the traditional rivalry between Valletta and Floriana). However, this view has value in considering holistic solutions for dealing with the accessibility of Valletta as a geographical space, in that it needs to be considered as part of the network of surrounding localities. It also provides some insight into how the regional aspect of Valletta 2018 has to negotiate between the notions of Malta as a region and the "Greater Valletta" area on the one hand, and the microdifferences between one locality and another which serve as important identifiers of local identity and social geography on the other.

There was very little change from the findings of the previous cycle of research concerning issues encountered in day-to-day life in Valletta, with common themes related to refuse collection and cleanliness, street infrastructure, parking and abandoned buildings being recurrent in the interviews, particularly with the Beltin and other Valletta residents.

When it came to refuse collection, interviewees took issue with collection times and with the piles of black bags that accumulated at collection points. These were noted even by commuters, who found them unsightly and unpleasant. One Valletta resident, originally from the UK, however, noted that collection in Valletta is actually much more frequent than in her home country, where it is carried out on a weekly basis.

It was also generally felt that there were weaknesses in the street infrastructure, particularly with pavements that needed to be fixed, as well as potholes and the occasional issues with the sewage system.

The issue of parking is twofold. Whilst commuters find it challenging to find parking every day, for the Valletta residents (Beltin and non-Beltin alike), the primary problem is lack of access caused by inconsiderate parking, especially if they are using a pushchair, pram or shopping wheelie bag. In one case which was mentioned

by a Valletta resident, a neighbour who has an impairment which impacts his ability to walk frequently finds problems entering his home because the entrance would have been blocked by a parked car. The same respondent said: "Not only do we not have many pavements you can walk on – but the few we have are used as parking space for cars."

The topic of abandoned buildings was also a recurrent theme. Most respondents from all the cohorts mentioned the issue and suggested that Government intervention may be required to manage the situation adequately. This elicited a particularly pronounced reaction by Beltin, whether residents or not, who tend to use the metaphor of the City's vitality – *il-ħajja tal-Belt* – and who therefore saw abandoned buildings as being an affront to this sense of thriving urban life. Investment by foreigners and the restoration of buildings to be used as boutique hotels was, in fact, seen as a lesser evil, being preferable to leaving buildings in an abandoned state, but causing concern on the long term effects of such trends. One commuter, who feels very attached to Valletta, stated: "The main problem is what to do with the old buildings – to make the city more liveable – or it can end up with lots of empty gaping holes. So how do we bring it back to use without knocking buildings down? How do we make it a living city?"

Urban regeneration and its impact on communal life
There is an overarching realisation among all the community groups that the fabric of Valletta's communal life is changing at a rapid rate. The changes observed, in part, echo the results obtained in the previous year, namely the increase in effort related to the upkeep of buildings, as well as a rise in the number of cultural events, catering establishments, nightlife and boutique hotels. However, an increased number of respondents have also expressed concern about changes in property and rental prices, which make it more difficult for people from Valletta, and for Maltese people in general, to live in the City. This has led several respondents to opine that Valletta will eventually become a city in which only foreigners and some wealthy Maltese can reasonably afford to live.

This opinion was frequently accompanied with a sense of helplessness with regard to Valletta's long term future which made a stark contrast with the largely positive outlook most respondents provided regarding the immediate future. The nostalgia with which such responses were often tinged was not limited to Beltin. A person from the commuter cohort, who is not Belti but is professionally based in Valletta, stated: "Valletta is my life. I would love to live here but they have not taken care of the market value and so I cannot afford to buy." However, this nostalgia is not universally felt, even among Beltin. One interviewee was also very clear in his opinion that Valletta will eventually become a city that will not be affordable for most Maltese to live in, let alone most Beltin – however, he expressed this as an objective account of the likely state of affairs, and did not attach any particular emotion with this predicament. It is noted that this interviewee lives in Valletta and identified himself as Belti, but emphasised that he is first and foremost European, and despises "nationalisms". Furthermore, he claimed that he was always an outsider because of his reasonably wealthy middle-class background, and because he does not associate with what are often perceived to be key elements of Valletta identity, such as football, Carnival and the parish feasts.

That Valletta is increasingly difficult to reside in was also echoed by non-Beltin who either live in Valletta or aspire to do so, and who saw their initial enthusiasm of wanting to live in the City being eroded by the day-to-day inconveniences or overwhelming affordability issues. Nevertheless, despite this general observation, respondents still express a positive attitude with regard to the changes which are understood to have been triggered by Valletta 2018, even if not directly related to the Cultural Programme, since these are often seen as upgrading Valletta's profile both culturally and infrastructurally.

This ambivalence in respondents between an assertive positivity towards the way in which buildings are being restored and reused on the one hand, and fatalistic concern with regard to the ultimate future of Valletta as a communal space on the other, reflects the inherently multifaceted nature of urban regeneration projects and requires further analysis.

Firstly, it is important to consider the specific context of Valletta and how its social history, even within living memory, has been punctured by displacement. At times, this has been caused by historical forces, particularly the mass emigration to other localities starting with World War II, where Valletta and the area around the Grand Harbour were prime targets for bombing by enemy forces. Other reasons for the displacement of families from Valletta were due to a blend of social and infrastructural reasons – examples of this include homeseekers (commonly newly-wed couples) who moved to other localities because of the lack of availability of appropriate and affordable housing within Valletta, families who were compelled to move because their accommodation couldn't cater for their needs, and elderly people who have had to move out, often reluctantly, because the building infrastructure made it very difficult for them to continue living there. Another factor mentioned by most Beltin is that being from Valletta has been a source of stigma which has only been alleviated in recent years, where Beltin were stereotypically perceived to be proud, rowdy and aggressive people, and the City itself was labelled a "slum area" by outsiders.[1] According to one of the respondents who is a Belti living outside Valletta, "it is only now that the City is being recognised for what it really is – and it should have always remained like that."

The fact that respondents, including Beltin, tended to demonstrate a positive outlook even with regard to developments that are unlikely to benefit the Valletta community directly, needs to be seen against this socio-historical backdrop of displacement and stigma. Seen in this light, gentrification concerns may not be immediately felt because, in fact, significant displacement has already occurred, and most Beltin actually live outside Valletta. Likewise, the upgrading of the building infrastructure and the influx of people is welcomed because it validates the dignity of Valletta in the face of the memory of stigma, and it provides vitality to the City in contrast to the longstanding trend towards depopulation. It is also to be borne in mind that communities are more or less dynamic, and although persons not from Valletta are seen as barranin (literally "outsiders"), identity is fluid and negotiable, and barranin can eventually (although often over generations) assimilated into Beltin.

On a conceptual level, this complex dynamic needs to be seen in terms of the power relations that permeate the process of urban regeneration. Michel de Certeau describes the city as a set of urban practices and a locus of memory, caught in a dialectic between strategies and tactics. For de Certeau, strategies are the wider systems of organisation created by governments, institutions and centres of power. Tactics on the other hand are the myriad ways in which the people of the city, the "walkers" or Wandersmänner, use and navigate the streets. De Certeau notes that because of the technical and scientific logic deployed when regeneration initiatives are applied to urban spaces, "the restoration economy tends to separate places from their practitioners" (de Certeau et al., 1998:139).

Michael Herzfeld (2006) observes, along similar lines, how hegemonic ideas of aesthetics and town planning give rise to "spatial cleansing", a term which signifies the "conceptual and physical clarification of boundaries" which replaces "relationships defined in terms of neighborhood" by "abstract description, enumeration and measurement". In this way, former residents can become redefined as intruders, or squatters.

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[1] In a way that is very typical of Valletta society, this prejudice is at times (not without a touch of self-irony) converted to a badge of honour and identity. One example is the fact that Valletta Football Club supporters call themselves "tal-Palestina" (literally "the Palestinians"), which is popularly explained as a reference to their rowdy and aggressive nature, similar to the stereotype which tended to be assigned to Palestinians in the news broadcasts of the 1970s.

In the case of Valletta, this analysis has been applied to the recent history of the Suq tal-Belt (Pace Bonello, 2013). Markets are notoriously resistant to state and administrative control and often come to be considered as "matter out of place" by the authorities (Herzfeld 2006:129). The classification of the edifice of the Suq as a Grade 1 building following years of neglect meant that the shopkeepers who held their stalls within the site suddenly found themselves trading inside a national monument, with many voicing the opinion that the Government should be making better use of the Nation's heritage. In this perspective, the shopkeepers were at best considered speculators waiting for a hand-out, and at worst they were considered squatters and a threat to national progress. Indeed, no great public uproar followed the closing down of the Suq as it was, and the leasing of the building to an important local business group, thereby making this site the locus for renovation which it currently is. In fact, the Suq tal-Belt project was welcomed by many respondents as an upgrade to the erstwhile decadent institution which had occupied such a central place in Valletta and even in Maltese life in general. Nevertheless, some respondents from the groups of Beltin voiced scepticism with regard to the Suq's eventual character and its affordability for locals. "Will it be just another supermarket, and will it be affordable?" one respondent from Valletta asked.

A simple division between the powerful and the powerless can, however, be misleading for a number of reasons. Firstly, although it is undeniable that a power relationship with regard to overall urban planning exists, de Certeau's assertions can be taken as an invitation to adopt a more humanistic, equitable and inclusive approach which privileges the community, and which ensures that "the first 'intermediaries' to be promoted should be the people who practice these places to be restored" (de Certeau et al.,1998:139). Secondly, it cannot be excluded that the users of the city are able to wield a certain degree of power and negotiate their interests, as is happening for instance with persons with disability through the agency of the KNPD. Thirdly, a simple dialectic between two groups does not suffice to give an accurate picture of reality. Along these lines, Wendell Berry contemplates a division between "exploitation" and "nurture", and proposes that these terms "describe a division not only between persons, but also within persons. We are all to some extent the products of an exploitative society, and it would be foolish and self-defeating to pretend that we do not bear its stamp" (Berry, 1977:7). Indeed, this duality reinforces the ambivalence expressed, especially in Malta where, as observed by Marc Morell, civil society itself is ambivalent, "in between the positions that, on the one hand, hold it to be something different than the state and the market and, on the other, the third space where the later two relate to one another" (Morell, 2009).

These observations indicate that it is essential that any intervention in Valletta which is bound to affect communal life needs to be adequately discussed with the community in ways that encourage their involvement. Furthermore, particularly in light of the fact that Valletta tends to be seen to be caught between the twin cogwheels of monumentalisation by the state on the one hand, and real estate speculation by private landowners on the other, it is crucial that any strategic action taken with regard to the city takes into consideration that social life in public spaces is a fundamental contributor towards individual and social quality of life, and that the will "to create spaces that work for people" makes "a tremendous difference ... to the life of a city" (Whyte 1980:15).

Along these lines, one respondent from the disability cohort expressed optimism that a policy of accessibility is now in place, and that KNPD will have a role in ensuring that events are as accessible as possible. However, it is very important that this approach expands to cover all forms of accessibility, and this can be only achieved through the direct involvement of the local community and the innovative reinterpretation of boundaries which have determined social exclusion. It is noted that the Valletta 2018 Foundation has on different occasions achieved this. Examples of this include: the Naqsam il-MUŻA project, where community events

took place in the erstwhile Museum of Fine Arts, and reproductions were displayed in spaces selected by members of the Valletta community; the Valletta Design Cluster Unconference, which directly targeted residents from the area; the November 2016 conference on Cities as Community Spaces, which was largely held in spaces which have a communal use; and the Ġewwa Barra Project, which engages with specific community groups within Valletta and strives to make use of public and communal spaces.

It is also important to recognise economic forces that are at play and which are beyond the reach of any particular individual, such as the "commodification of space" and the "financialisation of built environments" as recognised by Eric Clark (2010) which will inexorably govern the future use of private owned property in Valletta. This has been facilitated not only by the elevation of Valletta's profile, but also by legal mechanisms such as the 2009 reform of the rent laws. This reform was put into effect with a view to setting a fairer deal for landowners, and came after rent conditions had been largely unchanged since 1939, with cheap leases being handed down from one generation to the next. This led to a situation which in practice encouraged landowners to leave properties empty rather than rent them out, and buildings quickly became dilapidated as arrangements for their upkeep were not feasible. Because of their current state, these private properties are usually sold to people with enough means to rehabilitate them and, if the properties are still occupied, to pay off the tenants. Generally such people would be a contractor, an investor, or a wealthy expatriate. The reform is even less protective of commercial leases, and this is bound to create difficulties for small businesses within Valletta if the property they work from is a rented property. A Valletta landowner said that he is reclaiming one of his properties, currently in use as a company office, to build a boutique hotel: "I am sorry that I will be practically kicking them out – however, what am I expected to do? When I bought property in Valletta in the '90s, I was taken for a madman given that rents were so cheap – but when Valletta was 'dead', properties were being bought for a song, so in reality they have brought this upon themselves."

Despite the feeling that foreign investment and boutique hotels are a "lesser evil" as discussed earlier, there is a general sentiment that, as the legal and economic situation stands, there is very little to be done but play one's part in the game by maximising any properties one owns in Valletta, as it would be foolish not to do so. One respondent, a Belti living outside Valletta, said: "I regret not buying property in Valletta, but today everything is overpriced. There's not much you can do. If people can make money out of their property, you can't stop them."

Everyone with property is thus being turned inexorably into a speculator, the "products of an exploitative society" which Berry theorised. Throughout the community groups, particularly the Beltin, resident or not, and the commuter cohort, respondents have suggested that the only way to manage this situation and keep Valletta a feasible place to live in for Maltese people, particularly people from Valletta, was for the Government to intervene by introducing incentives: "Maybe the Government should introduce tax breaks for younger people to go live there. Or the state could refurbish some buildings. There are no incentives of grants or tax breaks. The Government should intervene and not let the market rule absolutely. Valletta needs intervention if it is to remain alive." A number of respondents expressed their concern that if these trends are not put in check, there is a risk that the city can become essentially a "tourist town", or just like any other city, "with a McDonald's here and a Starbucks there".

Concerns regarding gentrification were also voiced by the Manager of the Valletta Design Cluster project at the Biċċerija. The project was seen as a welcome upgrade to a neglected area by most respondents when the brief of the project was outlined to them (one of whom said "something like this can never be a bad thing, because you are giving it life"). However, the Manager of the project has expressed his worry that despite extensive and highly sensitive consultation and engagement with the community, the project could, by the

mere fact of making the area more attractive, trigger an increase in property or rental prices which could possibly modify the social fabric of the district. This illustrates how difficult it is to manage such processes unless political will and legal instruments are in place to control the inexorable pull of the free market.

In this regard, it is important to mention that at the time of writing this report, the Planning Authority launched a scheme intended to incentivise the restoration, conservation and maintenance of private residential properties within the Urban Conservation Areas, and buildings scheduled as Grade 1 and Grade 2.[2] The Scheme, called Irrestawra Darek ("Restore your home"), has an €18 million cap and is on a first-come-first-served basis.

Awareness and accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Programme

The current cycle of research registered an increased awareness of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme among the various cohorts interviewed in comparison to the previous year, in which most respondents were aware of the title of European Capital of Culture, but had limited insight as to what that entailed. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that in most cases, respondents were more keenly aware of individual events, and less of the Valletta 2018 Programme as a cohesive intiative.

In fact, during the semi-structured interviews held in 2016, interviewees were initially asked a general question as to whether they attended any events forming part of the Cultural Programme, followed by prompting if they could not identify any specific events themselves. In most cases, it transpired that this prompting was necessary as respondents had generally attended more than one event, but were unsure or unaware that they were part of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme. One respondent who is a Beltija and lives in Valletta claimed to be unaware of what the Cultural Programme entailed, but upon further questioning what emerged was that she had attended a good number of Valletta 2018 events, such as events at Pjazza Teatru Rjal, Notte Bianca and Żigużajg. Furthermore, she had frequently patronised the establishments in Strait Street and was keenly aware of the Suq tal-Belt project.

Initiatives of a more overtly public and collective nature, such as the Notte Bianca and the Valletta Green Festival, were understandably more widely known than projects which either had limited visibility, such as the Valletta Design Cluster project, or those which target a specific audience, such as Orpheus in the Underworld. Indeed, most of the respondents from the various cohorts recounted vivid memories of specific events, such as the Notte Bianca, Valletta Pageant of the Seas, Science in the City, the Valletta Film Festival and the Baroque Festival. Other less prominent events were also mentioned, including Blitz, Fragmenta, l-Ikla t-Tajba and Il-Warda tar-Riħ.

The respondents' uncertainty or lack of awareness that these events formed part of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme suggests that although individual events are being well publicised and attended, there is room for Valletta 2018 to have more visibility as a cohesive project and brand. Indeed, many respondents specifically expressed that they felt the Cultural Programme needed to be more visible, and showed a keen interest in knowing more, with some respondents requesting a copy of the programme from the interviewers.

One respondent, a Belti who does not live in Valletta but commutes on a daily basis because of work, was particularly critical of the lack of visibility: "I might have missed media coverage, but I do not know what the role of the Valletta 2018 Foundation is. Are they publicising enough? Are they getting Maltese people involved? So far all I have seen is a brochure with minimal, generic knowledge, and I have yet to see a programme of events. Somehow, they are not generating enough of a marketing buzz and perception is key. The message is just not getting out there." As in the previous year, some respondents were also confused because of the ubiquitousness of the Valletta 2018 logo, asking questions such as: "The logo is even on the Valletta-Sliema ferry and that raises the question: is the ferry running because of Valletta 2018?"

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[2] http://www.gov.mt/en/Government/Press%20Releases/Pages/2016/December/17/PR162911.aspx

All cohorts acknowledged that leaving a legacy is one of the main indicators of the success of the Valletta 2018 Programme. In fact, one of the respondents who is a Belti but does not reside in Valletta was highly concerned as to what will happen after 2018: "Are the businesses that are being set up in Valletta sustainable? Will the City be left to decay again? If entertainment and nightlife, as has happened in the past, moves somewhere else, will Government continue to throw money at Valletta?" Other respondents suggested that work with children and the involvement of local communities should be foci to ensure an organic continuity after 2018.

Interviewees also had ideas on what could be also included in the Programme, some of which are actually already taking place. These ideas included: educating children in arts and culture and involving them in cultural events; organing popular events in Valletta's residential areas, as shown in Valletta 2018's promotional video; a contemporary art museum; night markets; and free entrance to museums one Sunday a month.

Finally, it was interesting that some highly polarised perceptions with regard to the Cultural Programme were encountered, whereby one respondent, a highly-educated person who works in Valletta and spends much of his leisure time there, but is not from there, said "There has been too much emphasis on creating a high cultural Valletta 2018 programme. There is too much hype. What will happen in 2019? I think it will boom for a very short period and all will return to normal. The idea to squash and invest in a limited amount of time without thinking ahead is not a good one." Another respondent, also highly-educated, who is a Belti but does not associate with Valletta in a particularly emotional or nostalgic manner, was concerned on the other hand that the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme may tend towards populism and events that are only catered for the masses, without giving any real options to people who enjoy quality performances.

It is not being suggested that these polarised views reflect the general outlook of respondents, nor is it being implied that either of these diametrically opposed opinions necessarily indicates the nature of the Cultural Programme. Nevertheless, this extreme difference sheds light on two facts. Firstly, that in bringing their message accross, the Programming department within the Valletta 2018 Foundation are targeting a general public that is to a large extent receptive (as witnessed by the interest several respondents expressed to know more about the Cultural Programme) but which has to some extent grown accustomed to be sceptical of large scale programmes. Secondly, it is important that in bringing the message across, the diversity of the Cultural Programme is highlighted in a way that can adequately target different audiences, and that the Cultural Programme as a whole is given more widespread visibility.

As a final note, in the previous cycle of research, it had been recommended that the nature of the social strategy of the Valletta 2018 Programme is clarified, and this was discussed with the Programming Coordinator in terms of the Framework proposed by the Palmer Report (2004). In this meeting, it was established that the primary approaches applicable to the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme were Access Development, i.e. improving access to cultural projects and programmes, and Cultural Inclusion, i.e. extending opportunities for creation to people whose cultural values are marginalisesd by, or excluded from, the dominant cultural landscape. The first approach favours free or discounted events, as well as work with children and young people within their social or community programmes. In some cases, access initiatives for disabled people and the elderly were also included. The latter approach tends to focus on encouraging multivocality and the democratisation of culture, whilst maintaining culture as the primary goal. It is suggested that if the approaches which inform the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme are communicated to the public in ways that can be widely understood, this can be of assistance in giving greater visibility to the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme.

CONCLUSIONS & WAY FORWARD

From the findings above, a number of factors emerge which indicate that the Valletta 2018 Foundation is bringing about a significant change in the City. One point that was found to be particularly encouraging was that persons with disability are participating in events that form part of the Valletta 2018 Programme and are thereby also engaging with the City itself. Much work still needs to be done to render Valletta a more physically accessible place, but there is increasing confidence and optimism that this can be achieved. Other forms of access have also been improved by boosting the image of areas which were previously considered unsavoury by large groups of the Maltese population, such as Strait Street. This has also been welcomed in view of Valletta's history of stigma, depopulation and decline throughout the last few decades, as "life" and dignity are seen to be in the process of being brought back to the City.

Nevertheless, by catalysing urban regeneration, it is evident that rapid changes are taking place in Valletta's communal fabric. In this regard, a peculiar opposition emerges between the way interviewees felt about the immediate and long term futures of Valletta. In terms of the immediate future, the major disturbances were manageable (though by no means unimportant) issues such as garbage collection, parking, street infrastructure and abandoned buildings (both private and public). In this regard the process of urban regeneration which has been given momentum by Valletta 2018 is largely welcomed.

Concerning the long term future, however, respondents tended to express a sense of fatalism and helplessness at the prospects of Valletta eventually becoming an unfeasible place for most Beltin and Maltese people in general to live in.

If Valletta is to remain "a living city", as expressed in the Strategy for Valletta (June 2016), it is crucial to adopt consultative, inclusive and people-centred approaches that empower the City's community groups with regard to any strategic development or planning within Valletta. Indeed, the abovementioned Strategy envisions "a community-led regeneration approach which focuses on the physical and social characteristics of these areas which will transform them i.e. areas which are mostly residential in character into attractive affordable housing complemented by a quality public realm in accessible environs." This engagement with the community must of course remain also an integral part of the approach that the Valletta 2018 Foundation adopts as it continues to develop its Programme.

However, there is also the apprecation of property prices which is determined by inexorable economic forces beyond the control of any particular individual, and which the spotlight of the European Capital of Culture is merely serving to accelerate by making the City more attractive and sought after.

The recent incentives that have been launched for the restoration of houses within the Urban Conservation Area are of course a welcome development which can hopefully act to mitigate these trends, but may require the setting up of other initiatives if Valletta's future as a place of community is to be secured.

No changes within the methodology are envisaged at the current juncture. Nevertheless, it will be very important to maintain the key themes introduced in this report, namely accessibility, participation and awareness of the Cultural Programme, and urban regeneration and its effects on communal life. Also, keeping abreast of developments in Valletta, such as infrastructural works planned for lower Valletta, and gauging reactions to them will be important.

Regular contact will be maintained with the teams working on the Valletta Design Cluster project and Ġewwa Barra projects to discuss how developments in their respective programmes can link to the findings of this research, and vice versa. Likewise, quarterly meetings will be held throughout the year with the Programming Coordinator of the Valletta 2018 Foundation to keep abreast of developments and to provide reciprocal assistance wherever possible.

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ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND SPACE THROUGH VALLETTA 2018 CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

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ABSTRACT

The report outlines the salient work carried out throughout 2016. Building up on the first year of the research, which focused mostly on the gathering of data from primary sources, this year saw further empirical work being carried out as well as consolidation of data and data analysis. The latter covered both the physical and social/behavioural aspects of the research. Two sets of results emanating from deductive physical analyses were compared in order to assess current (2015/6) state of urban quality of the four Valletta neighbourhoods under study. Patterns emanating from inductive behavioural analysis and broader social phenomena emanating from NSO Census Data (specific for the four neighbourhoods) were in turn compared to the physical results in order to test for preliminary correlation. A current physical land-use analysis, carried out in 2015, was this year supplemented with an additional exercise of development planning applications submitted (and permits issued, as relevant), development notifications submitted (and approved) and enforcements issued in the four neighbourhoods, with a focus on change of uses. The latter was analysed to a greater depth in order to understand the nature of change that the physical fabric is undergoing. The above analyses all contributed to a richer and deeper understanding of the four neighbourhoods, which towards the end of 2016 was supplemented by a pilot for a Public Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) in order to understand local community needs, concerns and aspirations using an accessible online platform.

Keywords: Socio-spatial impact, social inclusion, cultural infrastructure, urban regeneration

INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to understand the spatial (physical) and social (behavioural) impact of cultural infrastructure, primarily architectural and urban design interventions, in terms of broader culture-led urban regeneration objectives for the various community and stakeholder groups over the research period. The interface between socio-cultural considerations and physical (on the ground) manifestation of interventions is the social dimension of urban design, and the research focuses on this delicate interface in order to understand the correlation between the two and frame this discussion within broader quality of life considerations, focusing on four case study areas – MUŻA, Old Covered Market, Strait Street and Biċċerija (chosen since it is the venue of the forthcoming Valletta Design Cluster) and their immediate neighbourhoods.

Much has been written about this crucial dimension of urban design, as the understanding of the latter has progressed from visual and functional considerations (and a concern with 'product') to deeper issues dealing with perception and social implications (with a resulting deeper concern with 'process'). Authors such as William H. Whyte (1980) and Jane Jacobs (1962) provide an important backbone to the understanding of this subject matter and this research has proceeded with the work of the Project for Public Spaces (PPS, 2008) that have addressed the central question "what makes a good place?". This has provided the theoretical background that has in turn translated into an analytical framework used in the initial part of this study, through the on-the-ground analysis of both physical qualities and behavioural patterns. Using this data, it has been possible to establish an initial potential correlation between physical phenomena and socio-cultural constructs, providing an initial understanding of the issues surrounding the four neighbourhoods in question, and enabling an informed approach to the development of the PPGIS, piloted towards the end of 2016.

METHODOLOGY

This is a mixed methods approach comprising both deductive and inductive avenues and qualitative and quantitative methods that support each other, together with data triangulation to bring both sets of data together. Throughout 2016, the research methodology was further refined and reorganised so as to now comprise ten stages, with the consolidation of the initial research stages, the inclusion of a new stage (Stage 8) in order to address the objectives in a more holistic manner, and the refinement of intermediate and final research outputs, as per the updated Research Methodology diagram (Figure 1).

Current baseline NSO Census data was collated for the four case study areas and their neighbourhoods as defined originally (Stage 1) in tandem with an initial literature review (Stage 2) that in turn led to the development of a theoretical framework that was piloted on the ground to become a refined analytical framework (Stage 4); in tandem, a physical analysis on the basis of the built fabric was also carried out in detail from first principles (Stage 3). The framework was then applied to the four case study areas in order to assess their physical urban design quality (Stage 5). This was followed up by key stakeholder interviews in order to enable a deeper understanding of the broader, non-physical phenomena that are influencing the urban spaces and that are leading the projects into very specific directions (Stage 6). An in-depth textual analysis and collation of patterns/categorisation of themes deriving from these interviews will be subsequently carried out in 2017. A behavioural analysis (structured observations), carried out in four predominant urban spaces (each located in the four neighbourhoods under study – the streets surrounding the Biċċerija, the urban space located right in front of the Old Covered Market, Pjazza Jean De Valette for the MUŻA area and the entire stretch of Strait Street), in an inductive manner, enabled the establishment of specific behavioural patterns that were categorised into principal themes (Stage 7). In tandem with the above stages, a new stage (Stage 8) was added midway through 2016, in order to better understand the physical phenomena that were happening on the ground. This stage comprised an assessment of planning applications, development notifications and enforcements as occurring between 1993 and summer 2016 (taken as the cut-off date to date), with an added focus for the period 2012 (when the ECoC was announced) – 2016. In particular, the focus of this study centred on analysis of impact due to change of uses (current and potential future impact) on the surrounding neighbourhoods, in both positive and negative terms.

The data gathering stages led to a data analysis period wherein we started to collate and consolidate the primary data emanating from Research Stages 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, and results of which are discussed in the next section of this report. The knowledge from the above stages fed into the pilot PPGIS workshop (Stage 9) for the Biċċerija neighbourhood in order to provide the study with a bottom-up perspective that is matched up with the results emanating from the other research stages. This will be followed up by its application to the four case study areas throughout the coming year.

Figure 1: Research Methodology diagram, as refined throughout 2016
(Source: Author)
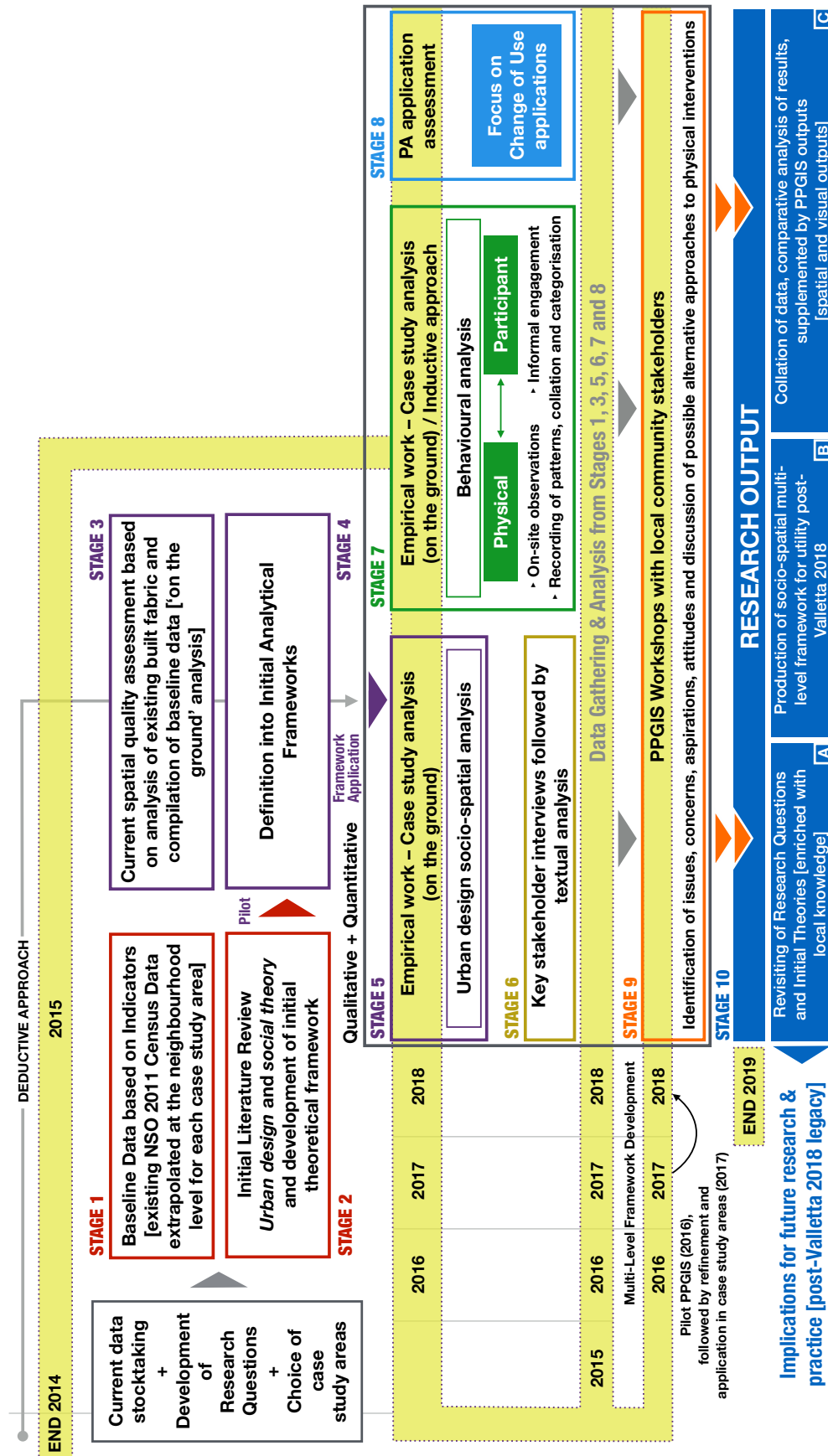
The research team having conducted top-down research on many of the issues, PPGIS gives residents an opportunity to submit their own views on the issues in a bottom-up manner, both in collaboration with other members of the community, or otherwise (Figure 2).

Figure 2: PPGIS utility
(Source: Author)
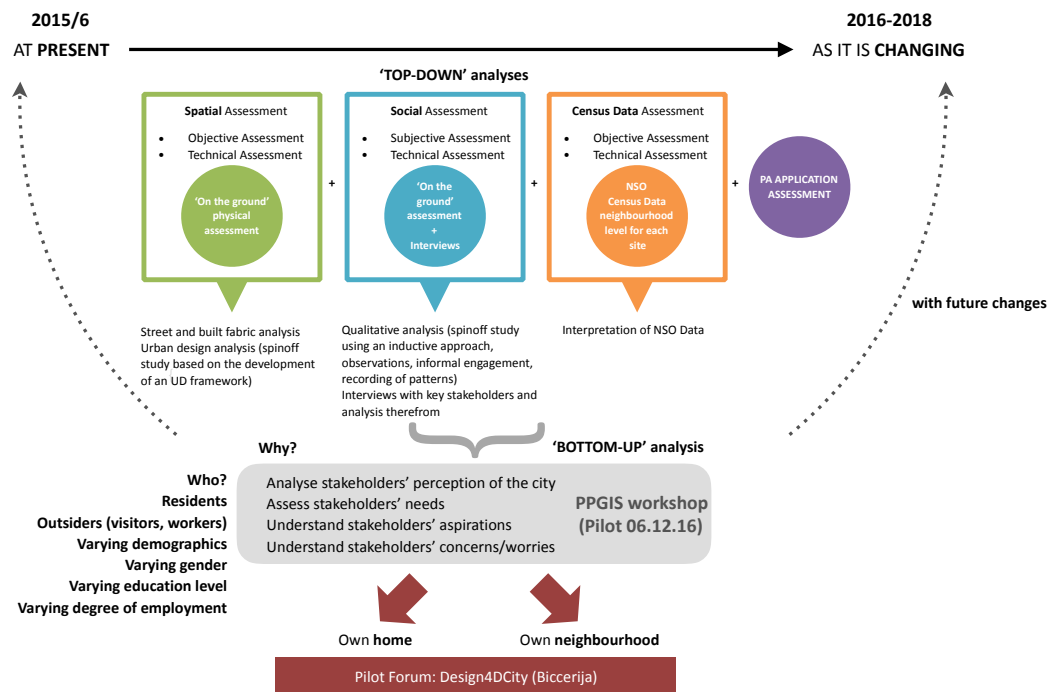
The PPGIS pilot workshop was held on the 6 December 2016 at San Ġorġ Preca Primary School in Valletta. The session was organised by the University of Malta in collaboration with the Valletta 2018 Foundation and centred on the key themes emanating from the Design4DCity workshop held some months earlier. The purpose of the PPGIS session was to test the 'communitymaps' interface, which was adapted for use in the Maltese Islands by Mapping for Change – a social enterprise within University College London. Local researchers collaborated with Mapping for Change in order to streamline the system to the specific project themes of Design4DCity, these being:

1.   The surrounding area;
2.   Services and public spaces;
3.   The future of the site;
4.   Cleanliness and quality of life;
5.   Accessibility; and
6.   Heritage

A group of ten people gathered to participate in the PPGIS session, composed of Valletta residents who answered to a call for participation and representatives of the organising bodies. Following a short introduction to the pilot project, the PPGIS interface was demonstrated on a screen, during which those present were encouraged to access the 'communitymaps' interface through their personal devices and use the software in real-time. Many of the participants immediately started digitally mapping matters of interest to them, and were interested to see that their inputs were immediately made public through the interface. Matters of digital ethics and best practice in digital mapping were highlighted during this mapping session.

Having familiarised the group with the digital mapping, by discussing the digitization of aspects relating to the first four themes of Design4DCity, a physical mapping session was implemented. This session was held for participants to appreciate that digital mapping can be more useful when preceded with a face-to-face communal discussion whilst mapping elements of the discussion on a physical map. The method used for this part of the pilot was the MAP-it Toolkit, during which two teams discussed the pedestrian and vehicular accessibility of the site.

As a follow-up to the pilot session, the results of the physical mapping session were digitized onto the 'communitymaps' interface using a purposely set-up Design4DCity account. Participants were encouraged to continue using the interface in their own time to validate the digitized results as well as to continue populating the map with a rich array of data related to the Design4DCity themes of interest to them.

FINDINGS

Spatial analyses

- The spatial quality analysis based on the analytical framework using criteria for accessibility and permeability, perception and comfort and vitality provides the highest overall score for MUŻA (3.61) followed by the Old Covered Market (3.30), Strait Street (3.18, although note that repeating this exercise specifically for the intersection with Old Theatre Street provides the highest score of 3.71) and Biċċerija (2.75).

- The physical analysis of the neighbourhoods based on the observations on the ground related to the state of repair of the built fabric provides the highest impression score for Biċċerija neighbourhood (3.37) followed by the Old Covered Market (3.36), MUŻA neighbourhood (3.26) and Strait Street (3.14). Comparing this to the Census' state of repair (as reported by home owners and translated into measureable scores) yields different results – MUŻA neighbourhood (4.60), followed by the Old Covered Market (4.20), Strait Street (4.10) and Biċċerija neighbourhood (3.90).

Table 1: On the ground spatial analyses and extrapolated NSO Census state of repair data
(Sources: Author, Azzopardi C. and NSO)

Spatial analyses (2015/2016)		Biccerija		Strait Street		Strait Street (intersection with Old Theatre Street)		MUŻA		Old Covered Market	
Spatial quality analysis based on analytical framework	Accessibility and Permeability		2.79		3.30		3.34		4.00		3.29
	Perception and Comfort		3.00		3.10		4.02		3.55		3.34
	Vitality		2.47		3.14		3.76		3.27		3.26
	Public space - Overall Score	score	**2.75**	score	**3.18**	score	**3.71**	score	**3.61**	score	**3.30**
Physical analysis based on state of repair of current built fabric	*Total*	*120*	*100*	*66*	*100*			*47*	*100*	*113*	*100*
	4.1 to 5	12	10.00	12	18.18			12	17.91	12	10.62
	3.1 to 4	50	41.67	18	27.27			21	31.34	42	37.17
	2.1 to 3	49	40.83	21	31.82			24	35.82	55	48.67
	1.1 to 2	7	5.83	15	22.73			8	11.94	4	3.54
	Less than or equal to 1	2	1.67	0	0.00			2	2.98	0	0.00
	Building state of repair - Impression Score	score	**3.37**	score	**3.14**			score	**3.26**	score	**3.36**
State of repair as reported in NSO 2011 Census (data extrapolated for each case study area)	*Total*	*229*	*100*	*61*	*100*			*69*	*100*	*121*	*100.0*
	Good state = 5	85	37.12	32	52.50			45	65.20	60	49.60
	Needs minor repairs = 4	85	37.12	13	21.30			20	29.00	34	28.10
	Needs moderate repairs = 3	25	10.92	7	11.50			4	5.80	17	14.00
	Needs serious repairs = 2	28	12.23	8	13.10			0	0.00	10	8.30
	Dilapidated = 1	6	2.62	1	1.60			0	0.00	0	0.00
	Residents state of repair - Impression Score	score	**3.90**	score	**4.10**			score	**4.60**	score	**4.20**

Land use analysis

The land use analysis, based on observations taken on the ground for the four neighbourhoods, was carried out specifically for the ground floor and repeated for the entire floorspace (Table 2).

- Ground floor use: This analysis is useful since it enables us to understand the degree of active frontage that may be present within the neighbourhoods, as a central contributor to vitality and natural surveillance (eyes on the street), which in turn results in a greater degree of safety. Table 2 shows that the highest presence of active frontages occurs in the MUŻA neighbourhood (89%), followed by Strait Street (67%), the Old Covered Market (57%) and the Biċċerija neighbourhood (56%). Conversely, the highest proportion of dead frontage is in Strait Street (32%), followed by the Biċċerija neighbourhood (27%), the Old Covered Market (25%) and the MUŻA neighbourhood (7%). These results again illustrate that the MUŻA neighbourhood has the highest degree of vitality, an important contributor to spatial quality, again correlating perfectly with the results in Table 1.

- Predominant land use: This analysis illustrates the state of affairs with land use correct as of 2016. The predominant land use in the Biċċerija neighbourhood, Strait Street and the Old Covered Market is residential (54%, 63% and 43% respectively) whereas in the MUŻA neighbourhood it is offices (34%), almost at par with administrative (government-related) uses (33%).

Table 2: Land use analysis, correct as of 2016
(Source: Author)

Land Use analysis (2015/2016)			Biccerija	Strait Street	MUŻA	Old Covered Market
GF use	A	Leisure	1%	20%	2%	6%
	C	Retail outlets	5%	20%	47%	24%
	T	Residential	40%	9%	1%	9%
	I	Office	9%	9%	5%	2%
	V	Administrative	1%	9%	34%	16%
	E	Hotel	–	–	1%	–
		Religious	11%	–	3%	10%
	to	Educational	4%	–	–	8%
		Cultural	2%	–	–	–
	D	Services	–	1%	1%	–
	E	Warehousing	19%	25%	–	20%
	A	Garage use	6%	2%	–	2%
	D	Vacant	2%	5%	6%	3%
Predominant use		Residential	54%	63%	10%	43%
(all floors)		Administrative	14%	8.5%	33%	16%
		Religious	10.5%	–	3%	10%
		Office	10%	18%	34%	18%
		Educational	4.5%	–	–	8%
		Cultural	4%	–	–	–
		Hotel	–	0.5%	1%	–
		Retail outlets	–	5.5%	7%	1.5%
		Services	–	–	1%	–
		Leisure	–	–	1%	0.5%
		Warehousing	–	–	1%	–
		Vacant	3%	4.5%	9%	3%

Analysis of development planning applications with regard to change of use and impact on the four neighbourhoods

Observed categories

Five categories have been singled out in terms of potential impact due to change of uses, scored on a scale of 0 to 3:

- Generation of People (and people movement): The positive impact due to the expected amount of people because of the change of use (where a score of 3 represents the presence of more people than a score of 1)
- Visual Implications: The positive impact on the built fabric, primarily the investment to the building façade (restoration and upgrade) and the generation of active frontages due to a more active change of use (where a score of 3 represents a greater potential for a better visual interface than a score of 1)
- Aural Implications: The negative impact of noise generation due to the change of use (e.g. presence of people, service vehicles, etc.; where a score of 3 represents more noise generation than a score of 1)
- Olfactory Implications: The negative impact of smell generation (e.g. the presence of on-site cooking for class 4D catering establishments; where a score of 3 represents a greater degree of smell generation than a score of 1)
- Litter generation: The negative impact of the amount of litter that would be produced from a change of use (where a score of 3 represents more litter generation than a score of 1)

Table 3: Impact definition due to change of use (Note: Residential uses also include properties that could later be rented out) *(Source: Author)*

VACANT to	People	Visual	Aural	Olfactory	Litter
Hotel class 3A	2	3	2	1	2
Hotel class 3B	3	3	3	3	3
Catering class 4D	3	3	3	3	3
Catering other classes	2	2	2	2	2
Retail	2	2	2	1	1
Service	2	2	1	0	1
Office	2	1	1	0	1
Residential*	1	1	1	0	1
Warehouse	1	0	2	1	1
Cultural	2	3	2	0	1
Education	2	2	2	0	1
Administration	2	1	1	0	1
Entertainment	3	1	2	0	1
Industry	2	0	3	2	3

In order to facilitate the scoring mechanism, the grades of scores were given from a vacant property to the respective use in question. In this way, the table becomes effectively a matrix wherein the relative score may be calculated with any change of use combination (Table 3).

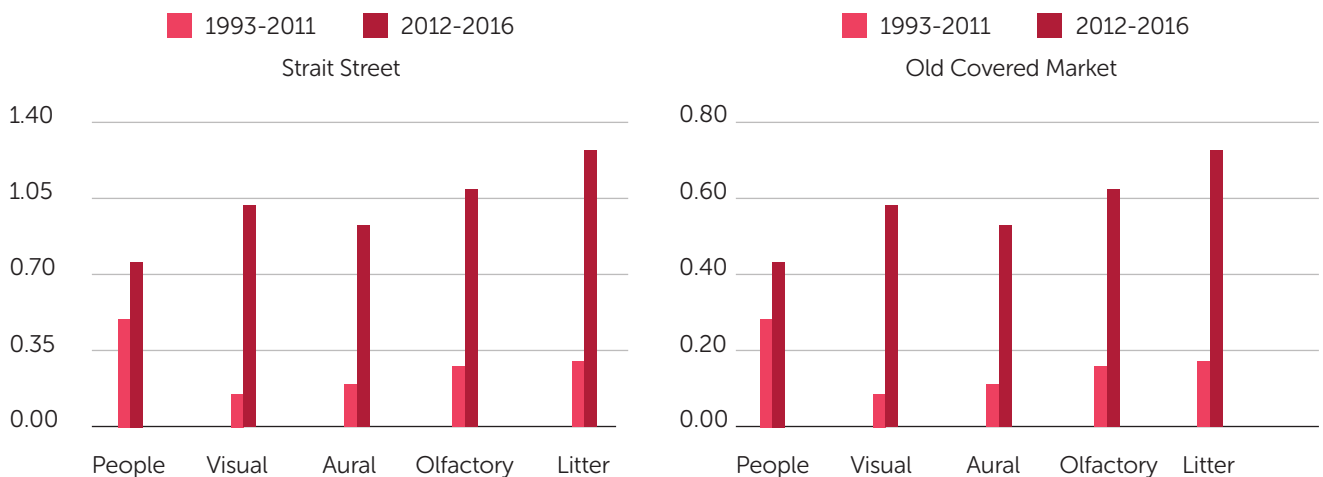**Figure 3:** The impact of change of use within each neighbourhood area – 1993-2016
(Source: Author)

The study reveals that the highest impact due to change of uses for all categories throughout the period
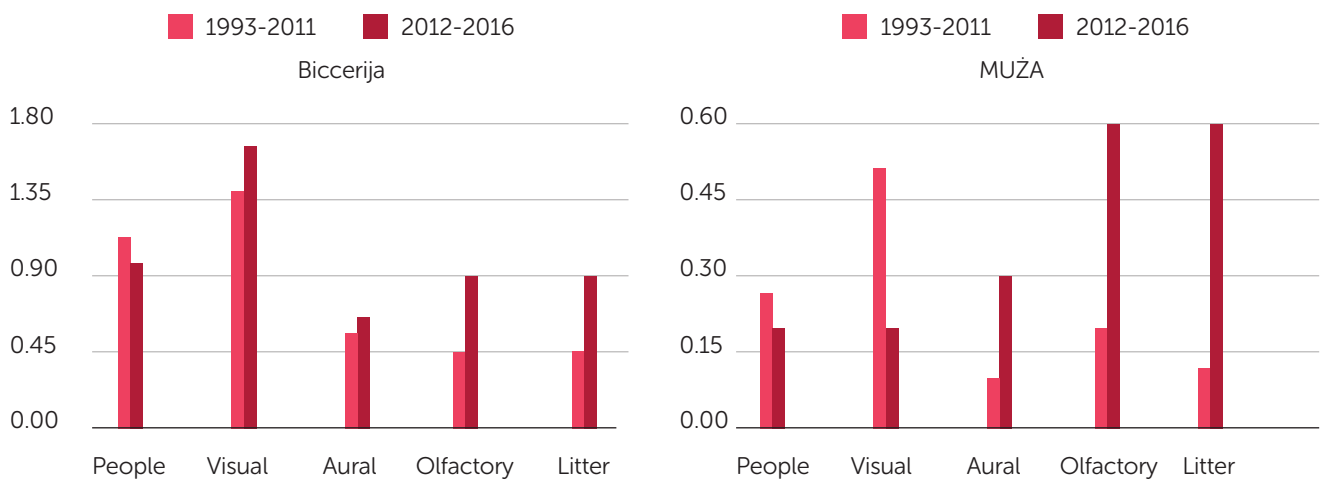

Strait Sttreet   Old Covered market   Biccerija   MUŻA
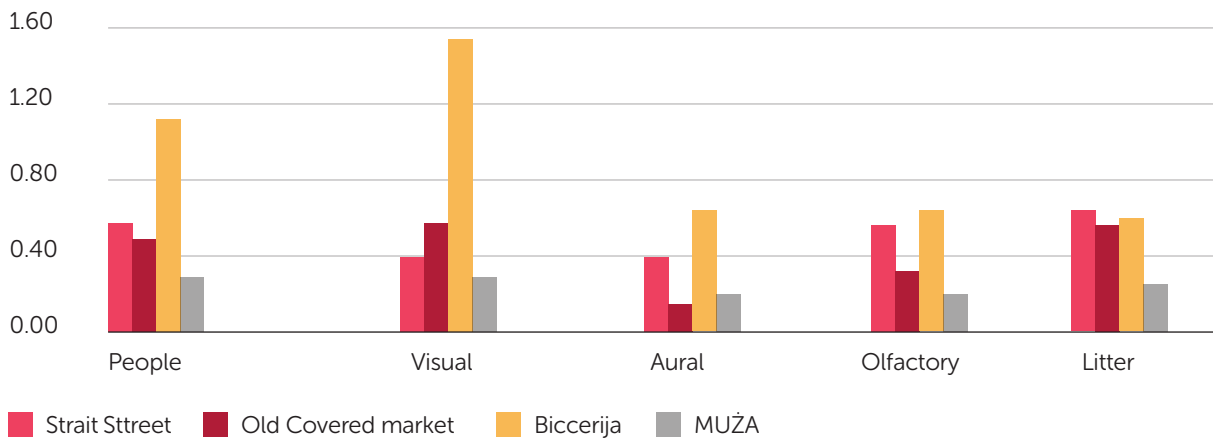
1993-2016 is within the Biċċerija neighbourhood, and least within the MUŻA neighbourhood. Repeating the exercise specifically for the period 2012 (the year Valletta was announced as 2018 European Capital of Culture) – 2016 one notes that the degree of impact for all categories is much higher (Figures 3, 4).

Figure 4: Comparing impact of change of use within each neighbourhood area pre- and post-2012
*(Source: Author)*

Post-2012, the amount of development planning applications for change of use has increased significantly

Figure 5 (top left): Biccerija — 1993-2011, 2012-2016

1.80 · 1.35 · 0.90 · 0.45 · 0.00

People · Visual · Aural · Olfactory · Litter

Figure 5 (top right): MUŻA — 1993-2011, 2012-2016

0.60 · 0.45 · 0.30 · 0.15 · 0.00

People · Visual · Aural · Olfactory · Litter

(Figure 5).

Figure 5: Amount of applications for change of use – 1993-summer 2016
(Source: Author)

Change of use/years
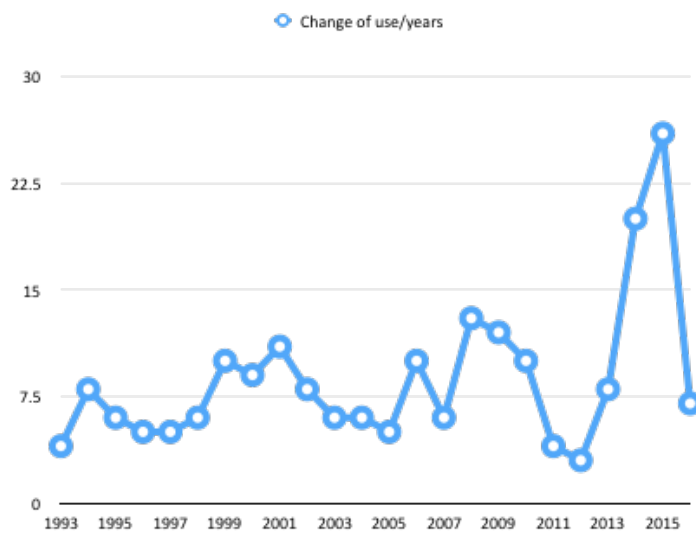
Within this period (2012 - 2016), the highest impact is again in the Biċċerija neighbourhood (Figure 6), followed by Strait Street. In order to understand why such impact is most significant in these two neighbourhoods, we sought to analyse the nature of the change of use in more depth – in terms of scale of impact of commercial uses, for instance, hotels and catering establishments with on-site cooking would have a higher impact than retail or service-oriented commercial uses, or catering uses without on-site cooking, and even more than offices – resulting in more generation of people, greater aural and olfactory implications and a greater implication for litter generation. It becomes clear that in the Biċċerija neighbourhood and along Strait Street, the majority of the premises are changing their uses into commercial uses (from residential or vacant premises), or into a higher level of commercial use (for instance, from office to retail, or from retail to catering).

All the premises located in the Biċċerija neighbourhood that have applied for a change of use, post-2012, are changing into a higher level of commercial use (Figure 7). In contrast, within the neighbourhoods surrounding MUŻA and the Old Covered Market, change of use here is not of a commercial nature (for instance from warehousing to residential) or it remains within the same level of commercial use (for instance different typologies of retail).

Figure 6: The impact of change of use within each neighbourhood area – 2012-2016
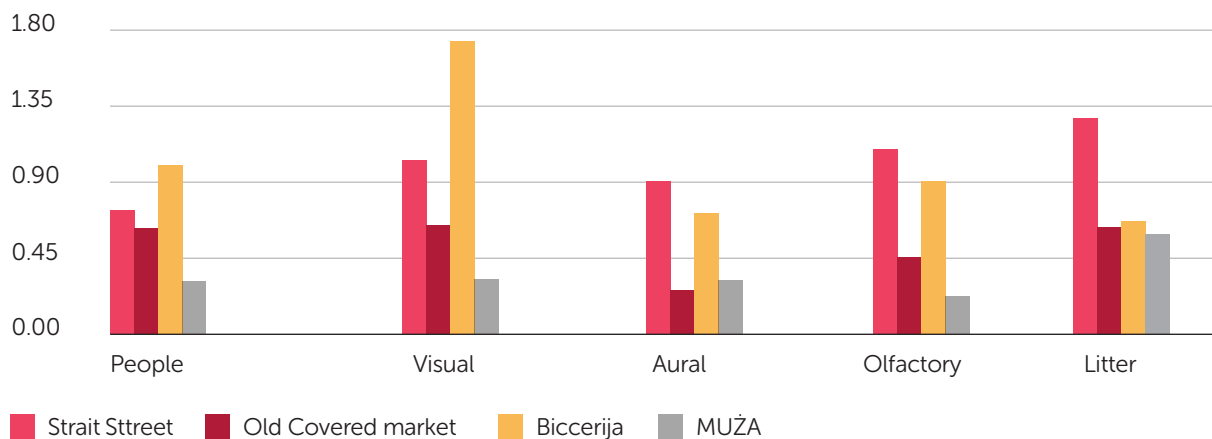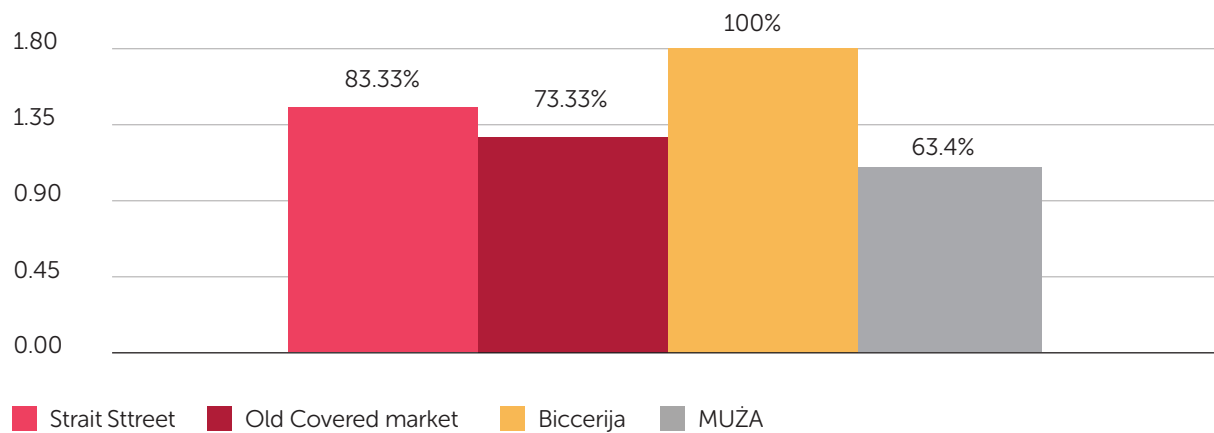*(Source: Author)*

Figure 7: Comparing degree of commercial change of use within each neighbourhood area
(Source: Author)

Legend: Strait Sttreet · Old Covered market · Biccerija · MUŻA

Social and Behavioural Analyses for the four neighbourhoods

Taking the Census data (NSO 2012) and analysing the most relevant demographic data at the neighbourhood level (Table 4) reveals that all four sites are characterised by an ageing population (with the highest percentage recorded in the MUŻA neighbourhood, followed by the Old Covered Market neighbourhood). The data for literacy, employment and education follows similar trends:

- Literacy: Although the majority of residents are literate, the highest percentage of illiterate persons is within the Biċċerija neighbourhood.
- Employment: Although a good percentage of residents are employed, the highest percentage of unemployed people is registered within the Biċċerija neighbourhood (and conversely the percentage of employed residents, being lowest in the Biċċerija neighbourhood), as well as for those who cannot work due to illness/disability.
- Education: The majority of residents in all four sites have had mandatory schooling, however the highest percentage of residents with no schooling is registered in the Biċċerija neighbourhood.

Table 4: Census data analysis at the neighbourhood scale
(Adapted: NSO)

Census Data analysis (NSO)		Biccerija		Strait Street		MUŻA		Old Covered Market	
		count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
Persons living by age group	*Total*	*457*	*100*	*114*	*100*	*159*	*100*	*246*	*100*
	0-14	61	13.35	7	6.14	21	13.21	23	9.35
	15-24	53	11.60	7	6.14	18	11.32	20	8.13
	25-44	105	22.98	24	21.05	30	18.87	62	25.20
	45-64	138	30.20	38	33.33	40	25.16	67	27.24
	65+	100	21.88	38	33.33	50	31.45	74	30.08
Literacy	*Total*	*416*	*100*	*110*	*100*	*142*	*100*	*229*	*100*
	Literate	349	83.90	97	88.20	126	88.70	219	95.60
	Illiterate	67	16.10	13	11.80	16	11.30	10	4.40
Employment	*Total*	*396*	*100*	*107*	*100*	*138*	*100*	*223*	*100*
	Employed	121	30.60	45	42.10	47	34.10	87	39.00
	Unemployed	39	9.80	5	4.70	9	6.50	7	3.10
	Student or person having an unpaid working experience	11	2.80	4	3.70	4	2.90	9	4.00
	Retired	87	22.00	26	24.30	32	23.20	56	25.10
	Cannot work due to illness or disability	18	4.50	2	1.90	3	2.20	3	1.30
	Taking care of the house and/or family	106	26.80	23	21.50	36	26.10	56	25.10
	Other inactive persons	14	3.50	2	1.90	7	5.10	5	2.20
Education	*Total*	*396*	*100*	*107*	*100*	*138*	*100*	*223*	*100.0*
	No schooling	14	3.54	0	0.00	4	2.90	3	1.35
	Primary	118	29.80	19	17.80	31	22.46	62	27.80
	Lower Secondary	212	53.54	52	48.60	77	55.80	87	39.01
	Upper Secondary	22	5.56	14	13.10	16	11.59	33	14.80
	Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary	9	2.27	4	3.70	1	0.72	2	0.90
	Tertiary	21	5.30	18	16.80	9	6.50	36	16.10
Education (regrouped categories)	*Total*	*396*	*100*	*107*	*100*	*138*	*100*	*223*	*100.0*
	No schooling	14	3.54	0	0.00	4	2.90	3	1.35
	Mandatory	361	91.20	89	83.20	125	90.58	184	82.51
	Tertiary	21	5.30	18	16.82	9	6.52	36	16.14

As discussed in Section 6, behavioural traits were observed within the predominant spaces located in each of the four neighbourhoods and consolidated into nine patterns (influences), detailed as follows:

1. Aural: The aural category encapsulates all sensorial experiences relating to sound
2. Vehicular and Pedestrian Interface: This category reflects the presence of moving vehicles, the interface between pedestrians and vehicles, as well as parked vehicles which restrict access or block views
3. User Categories: This category sheds light on the types of users within the space, age, gender, ethnicity and profession amongst others
4. Thermal Comfort: Thermal comfort refers to the level of comfort of the user due to environmental influences and weather conditions
5. Relating to Cleanliness: This category relates to all the factors which reflect the condition of the space, state of cleanliness or absence thereof
6. Actual Use of Space: This category reflects types of user experiences and activity relating to the use of the space and vice versa, how the space and the land uses set within the space induce human activity
7. Perceptual Influences and Use of Space: This category includes abstract and intangible notions relating to the use of space which also include the observer's perception of the atmosphere at the time
8. Human Interaction: Human interaction encapsulates the interface between two humans or more
9. Olfactory: The olfactory category encapsulates all sensorial experiences relating to smell.

Table 5: Behavioural influences – categorisation of observed patterns
(Source: Attard, D.)

INFLUENCES	INFLUENCE NO.
Aural	1
Vehicular and Pedestrian Interface	2
User Catergories	3
Thermal Comfort	4
Relating to Cleanliness	5
Actual Use of Space	6
Perceptual Influences and use of space	7
Human Interaction	8
Olfactory	9

INFLUENCE NO.	THEMES	THEMES REF.
1.4.5.9	Sensorial/Environmental Influences	A
3.8	People/ Users and their Interaction	B
2	Vehicular & Pedestrian Interface	C
6.7	Actual/Percieved Use of Space	D

Even more relevant to the study was the subsequent categorisation of these patterns into four broader themes, as follows:

A. Sensorial/Environmental Influences that encompasses the Aural, Thermal Comfort, Olfactory and Relating to Cleanliness Influences.
B. People/Users and their Interaction that encompasses User Categories and Human Interaction.
C. Vehicular and Pedestrian Interface that was not categorised further due to its distinct and significant role within the urban spaces under study.
D. Actual/Perceived Use of Space that encompasses Actual Use of Space and Perceptual Influences and Use of Space.

The groups of patterns and further categories are illustrated in Table 5.

Behavioural mapping reveals the following predominant groups of patterns (Figure 8):

- Strait Street – Aural and Vehicular/Pedestrian Interface influences, very much influenced by the configuration of the urban space and the tight height-to-width ratio that characterises the street and that amplifies sounds emanating from the buildings that align its edges, as well as the conflicts that arise when vehicles access the narrow portions of this street to the detriment of the pedestrian experience.

- Old Covered Market – Aural and actual use of space influences, very much influenced by the nature of the land uses surrounding and defining the urban space (the presence of retail outlets is second highest after MUŻA at 24%, Table 2).

-       Biċċerija – Actual use of space and aural influences, primarily due to the interaction between resident and visitor, the observed and the observer, the fine balance that occurs between privacy, natural surveillance and visual permeability. It is a neighbourhood wherein the indoor spills out into the semi-private (such as the balcony spaces) and semi-public spaces (wherein space is often claimed in an informal manner).

-       Pjazza Jean De Valette (MUŻA) – Human interaction and actual use of space influences, particularly due to the lines of flow that characterise the urban space from multiple directions and that increase the chances of encounter; this is also very much in line with the high degree of vitality and presence of active frontages, as discussed in Sections 7.1 and 7.2, which characterise this neighbourhood.

Further collating into the four broad categories illustrates that Strait Street, the Biċċerija and the Old Covered Market neighbourhoods are dominated by sensorial/environmental influences whereas Pjazza

Figure 8: The role of the influences within each neighbourhood area – tables and radar charts
(Source: Attard, D.)
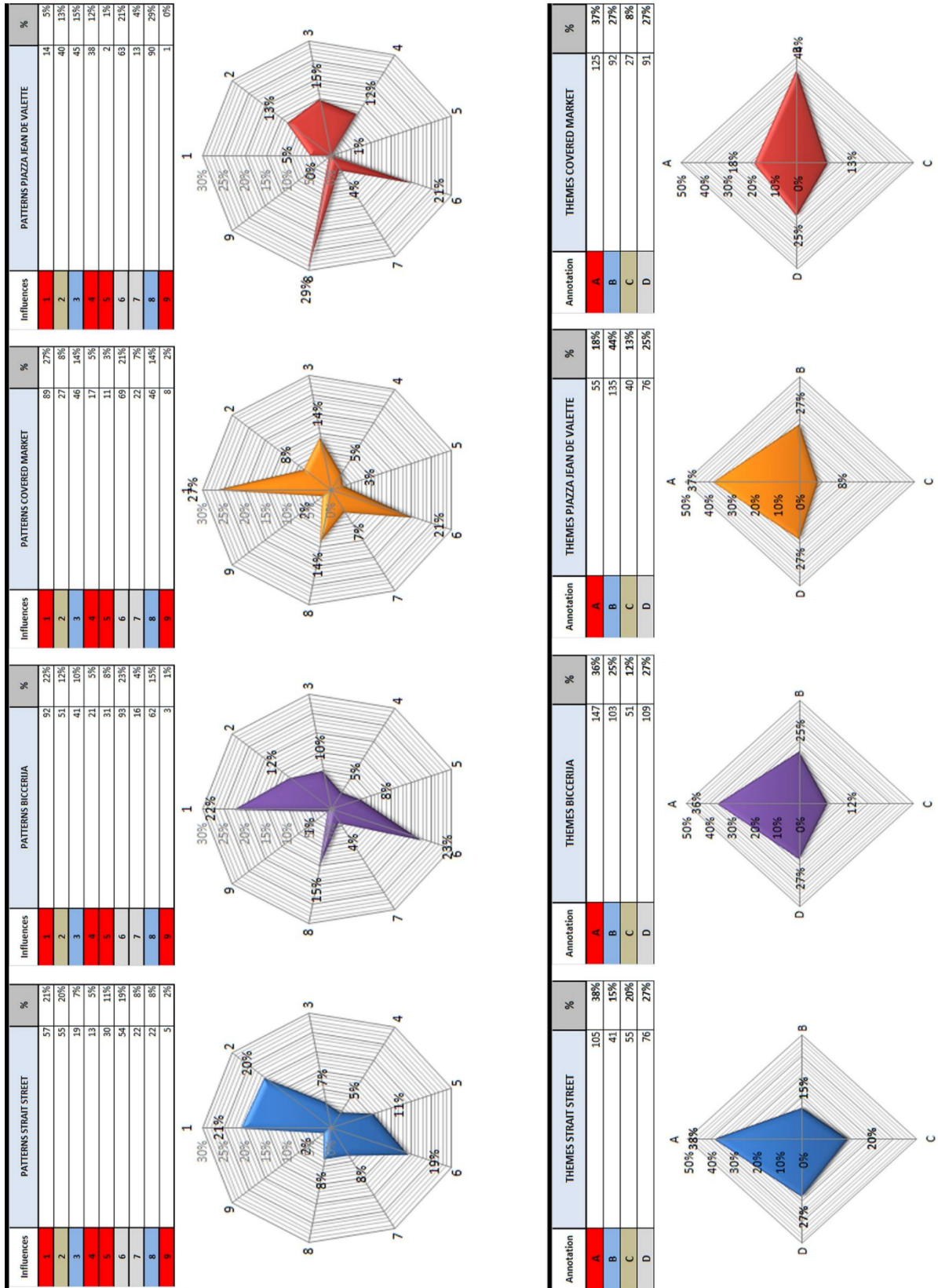
CONCLUSIONS & WAY FORWARD

Jean De Valette (MUŻA neighbourhood) is dominated by People/Users and their Interaction.

Intermediate conclusions are provided at the end of each of the above sub-sections within Section 7. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to note that the following:

- **Spatial quality and built fabric analysis**: There is a direct correlation of results from the spatial quality analysis and the Census data, wherein the MUŻA neighbourhood scores highest and Biċċerija tends to have the lowest quality rating out of the four sites.

- **Land use analysis:** The study on land uses becomes even more relevant in the discussion of new uses that are characterising the neighbourhoods, particularly with the injection of non-residential uses (generally of a commercial nature), as discussed in Section 7.3, which could be positive in terms of the generation of active frontages and increased vitality but that could also result in a negative impact.

- **Analysis of development planning applications:** This was a very fruitful exercise that shall be updated throughout the remaining research period as it enables us to visualise the ripple effect that Valletta 2018 (and its flagship projects) is having, by instigating and incentivising change that in turn could have both positive and negative impacts on the entire neighbourhood.

- **Social analysis:** Although the spatial and social data is from different sources and thus non-comparable, it is nevertheless interesting to note that the highest percentages for illiterate, unemployed and non-schooled residents corresponds to the lowest spatial quality score and reported state of repair for the building stock within the Biċċerija neighbourhood. This may lead one to speculate that there may be a direct correlation between the state of the urban space/housing conditions and the level of achievement of the residents and it would be interesting to include a degree of social analysis in the next round of physical analysis in the forthcoming years of the research, so as to test for direct correlation, if it exists.

- **Behavioural analysis:** It is not hard to imagine that the changing nature of the four sites, as discussed in Section 7.3, will play a major role in either reinforcing or changing the nature of the behavioural influences, such as the possibility of increased vehicular/pedestrian conflicts (unless accompanied by a strategic movement strategy for Valletta), a greater influence of aural, olfactory and cleanliness-related influences (particularly with the advent of catering establishments within the sites) and increased opportunities for human interaction due to the greater pedestrian traffic/footfall resulting from change of uses.

The next steps for this research in 2017 are to be consolidated into the following tasks:

- Further development and update of change of use as occurring through an analysis of development planning applications for the latter part of 2016 and throughout 2017.

- In-depth textual analysis of Interviews carried out with key stakeholders in order to be able to relate the phenomena discussed above with strategic decisions being taken on the ground by the project leaders.

- Development of PPGIS workshops for the four sites under study (in collaboration with Design4DCity) and further development of Mapping for Change platform, including the digital transfer of the most significant data emanating from this research in order to stimulate debate within the local community.

- Further analysis of socio-spatial correlation that could be followed up by statistical analysis – converge the various results outlined above together in order to be able to understand the socio-spatial implications on the four neighbourhoods in question.

- Initial development of multi-level framework that combines the different mixed methods used within the research methodology in view of the final research output.

Enriched by the results from the PPGIS, we shall be able to have an informed outlook as to the implications of change due to the cultural infrastructure and the social/attitudinal and behavioural changes (vis-à-vis the different stakeholders) that are resulting therefrom, by having the direct involvement of the local community and an understanding of their needs, concerns and aspirations. This will provide the prelude for the repetition of the physical and behavioural analyses that will occur once again in 2018, which will subsequently enable us to monitor the degree of change that has occurred over the research period, leading to a potential multi-level framework and strategy to be defined within a post-2018 legacy, as illustrated in the Research Output in Figure 1.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

The European Capital of Culture title has triggered a series of infrastructural and social changes within Valletta, and it can be argued that never in recent memory has the city undergone such rapid change within so short a period of time. The impact of this change on local communities is undoubtedly of primary concern for the legacy of Valletta 2018. The studies presented within this report share this view and seek to understand these often intangible impacts through a series of qualitative interventions with different communities that reside in, or interact with, Valletta.

Foremost amongst the physical changes taking place in the city are the four infrastructural projects being spearheaded by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, which are the focus of one of the studies presented in this report. The analysis of these sites presents a snapshot of the changing face of the city, with all four corners of Valletta undergoing different types of development. Each of these projects presents unique opportunities and challenges, both for people who interact with the site on an intermittent basis and, most pertinently, for the local communities who live and work within the vicinity. This research allows for a greater understanding of how these opportunities can be exploited and challenges met.

The engagement of local communities in the Valletta 2018 project extends beyond the confines of these four infrastructural projects, to include their participation in Valletta 2018-related activities and their perspectives on the general changes taking place within the city. To this end, the accessibility of the Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme and the Foundation's approach to community inclusion is of primary interest. This research finds that there is a prevalently ambivalent attitude towards the rapid social change being undergone in Valletta, with concern for the survival of Valletta's local communities existing alongside excitement for the city's social, cultural and economic regeneration.